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## SOUTHERN SIDELIGHTS.<sup>1</sup>

This book is a valuable contribution to the subject of Southern institutions. It is written in a fairly attractive style, and every page gives evidence of faithful research and manifest efforts at impartiality. Nor has Mr. Ingle lacked preparation for the performance of his task. A native of Baltimore and a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University, he has latterly found in a successful career as journalist in the city of Washington extraordinary opportunities for prosecuting those studies whose collected results appear in the present volume. He has been able to rescue from many original sources, a mine of the richest material possible relating to life in the South before the war, while copious appendices fairly bristle with statistics of unusual interest and importance. Undoubtedly the book will be read and enjoyed, not only by Southerners, but by people everywhere who are desirous of more thoroughly understanding the civilization of a section that has played a very great rôle in our national history.

Mr. Ingle divides his book into nine chapters of which the most interesting, probably, are those entitled respectively, "Traits of the People," "Phases of Industry," "The Educational Situation," "Literary Aspirations," "The Peculiar Institution," and "The Crisis."

After describing the various classes in old Southern society our author undertakes to show that although the South was unusually influential in the work of expanding the territory of the United States, that section received only a small portion of the land, relatively speaking, when the partition took place. We think he is not altogether clear

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<sup>1</sup>*Southern Sidelights*. A picture of social and economic life in the South a generation before the War. By Edward Ingle, A.B. [Library of Economics and Politics.] New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. 1896. 8 vo. pp 373.

on this point. Surely the South was part of the country. Nor do we think it is altogether correct to say that the admission of Florida and Texas made no material changes in Southern civilization. The Seminole war appears to have created a decided war spirit in the Southeast, while the acquisition of the Republic of Texas certainly gave fresh hopes to the slave power by opening up all sorts of opportunities for aggressive movements against Mexico. On these points, however, there is much controversy, and Mr. Ingle's portraiture of the social side of Southern life is, after all, of more importance than his efforts in the field of political history. Nor does he claim that his book is a history.

With regard to the position of women in the Old South, our author gives the traditional view in a style that might be improved: "Southerners held their women in honor and respect, and showed them a deference that was sincere, though having for an outsider, an appearance at times of exaggeration, and which was not always enjoyed by the 'poor white' class. No patience was had with plans to bring women into competition with men in public life; but a generalization of the Pauline advice to the Corinthian Church did not hinder the mother from developing a valuable administrative capacity in domestic affairs, or from exercising a gentle but peaceful sway over husband and sons, while she set the example of virtue and modesty for the daughters." On the other hand, the men of the South, accustomed to life in the open air and skilled in the use of arms, were self-reliant and martial, while the nature of their occupations tended to make them honorable rather than calculating. Hospitality was universal; but, of course, it was more noticeable in the country than in the towns.

Mr. Ingle calls cotton, sugar, and tobacco the Southern trinity, the first of which was king. Curiously enough, the introduction of the fleecy staple and that of slavery were almost coeval, while the invention of the cotton-gin created the destiny of the South. Our author has some well-considered remarks on Southern agricultural history; but we think

that if he had explained more fully the lack of means of communication in the South, the explanation of the supremacy of cotton would have been more obvious. It could always be sold, or in the language of the plantation, "it was as good as gold." And ready money was needed, for the South had in colonial days been taught to seek its supplies abroad, and this dependence was continued when the North took the place of the mother-country.

Then, again, Mr. Ingle might have found in climatic influences important factors that entered into the industrial conditions of the Southern States. Each of the great staples was better adapted to the warmer portions of the country than the cooler, and each could be more profitably cultivated on a large scale than on a small one. When capital had once been invested in lands and slaves, it became fixed, and with the development of other regions, could not have been easily put into new industries, even if this had been desired. In spite of these drawbacks, however, the history of the Southern States shows that factories of one sort and another sprang up in many parts of the South. There were machine-shops in Virginia, cotton-mills in South Carolina and in Georgia, salt-works in Florida, a bagging factory in Louisville, a gingham-mill in Alabama, and paper-mills in several other States. In the matter of wages it is interesting to note that in 1851 the average combined wages of males and females in the cotton-mills of Massachusetts were \$46.50 a month, and in South Carolina \$22.24. The average for each class, in Mr. Ingle's opinion, was higher in the North than in the South. Curiously enough, it is further pointed out that it was not unusual for manufacturing corporations both to own slaves and to employ them as operatives in the mills. There seems to have been no opposition to employing the whites and the blacks in the same factory, although the two races do not appear to have worked in the same departments. Owing to the predominance of agriculture manufacturing interests languished, and when the latter began to take on new life it

was mainly along lines "requiring limited skill on the part of operatives or employees, such as mining, tanning, lumbering, and other primary transformations of raw material."

Mr. Ingle makes out a better showing for the South in the field of commerce and trade than in that of manufactures, although, as the years passed by, the North outstripped the South in the race for commercial supremacy. Absence of urban conditions of course retarded growth along these lines, and in spite of subscription to railway enterprises and dazzling schemes without number to improve Southern commerce, business could not be much improved in the cities, and planting grew less and less profitable. Another drawback was the imperfect development of the credit system; when so many fortunes were lost in the ruin of State banks one should not be surprised that one or two of the Southwestern States had constitutional prohibitions against the establishment of banks.

A curious illustration of the gradual substitution of the North for England as a base of supplies for the Southern States is afforded by the following figures taken from Mr. Ingle's book: "Massachusetts in 1790-'91 exported \$2,519,651, worth of goods; New York, \$2,505,465; Maryland, \$2,239,691; Virginia, \$3,131,845; and South Carolina \$2,693,268. Within ten years New York had distanced Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and the individual Southern States just mentioned; and within twenty<sup>7</sup> years Maryland had exports as valuable as those of Virginia and South Carolina combined. In 1815-'16 New York again was far in advance of the other States, South Carolina showed a tendency to regain its old position of equality with Maryland and Virginia, and the second of those neighboring States was ahead of the first." In the same period there was noticeable a great development of the coastwise trade. But the agricultural character of the South made it become more and more dependent upon other sections, industrially and commercially. Yet it is singular to find that in those States where commerce, manufactures, and agriculture were more

evenly balanced, there does not appear to have been as great a desire for political independence of the North as elsewhere.

Turning now to less material matters, one should not be surprised to find in a country as sparsely settled as the South was, where tutors were largely in vogue, and where, in colonial days particularly, it was customary among the wealthier planters to send their sons to school and college in England, that popular education was for a long time at a very low ebb. It was found, for example, in 1840 that sixty-three per cent. of the illiteracy of the country among adult whites was in the South. But in the several explanations of this unfortunate phenomenon Mr. Ingle sees encouragement rather than discouragement. History shows that the South was interested in the cause of education, and although the free school system was rather imperfectly developed, various academies, colleges, and universities indicated a concern for education. Some of these universities, like those of Virginia and North Carolina, for instance, exerted a great influence; and their strength was much increased when the love of section, becoming stronger than that of country, caused many parents to remove their sons from colleges in the North and to place them in Southern institutions. No reference, it may be remarked, is made to the South Carolina college, which stood very high before the war.

Public libraries amounted to very little in the Old South, and even now they do not appear to be much appreciated; but this was doubtless the result of the absence of town-life. One should remember, however, that private libraries, on the other hand, were both numerous and valuable. Among the collections of books to which the public had access, Mr. Ingle mentions those of the Petersburg Library Association, the Savannah Library Association, the Charleston Library Association, and the Apprentices' Library of the same city. The showing of the South was very poor, if we are to accept the statement that in 1860, of the 27,730 libraries of a public nature in the United States,

with 13,316,379 volumes, the Southern States had 5,514, with 3,177,708. It seems that the subscription feature generally prevailed in circulating libraries, the idea of taxation for their support being then, and even still, almost unknown. Those who know anything at all about the subject will scarcely be disposed to dissent from the opinion of Mr. Ingle that illiteracy was no foundation for free libraries, and that the defective system of education was the prime cause of the evil.

In the field of journalism the South showed a steady improvement, both in the number of newspapers and in the number of readers. Our author cites the fact, for instance, that in 1840 the average was one paper for 10,399 free persons, and one for 8,399 free persons in 1860. For the same period there seems to have been a smaller relative increase in the worth. These newspapers, however, appear to have been mainly devoted to political discussions, evidence of which is furnished by the fact that in 1860 of the 1,178 Southern periodicals, 992 were devoted to politics, 78 to literature, 63 to religion, and 45 to miscellaneous subjects. They seem to have been decidedly personal, but much of the editorial writing was distinguished for the purity of its diction and the thoroughness of its knowledge. "Two obstacles confronted Southern journalism," continues our author. "The manifestations of the slavery agitation must have hampered the editor in dealing with public questions. The bulk of his readers were directly or indirectly interested in the institution against which centred the opposition of the rest of the country to the South. To have joined the opposition by indirection, so many were the ramifications of the problem, would have tended to destroy a journalist's career of usefulness. . . . Another drawback, slighter in degree, the natural result of journalism in the days when disagreements about politics frequently meant personal antagonism, was the liability of the editor to be compelled to indorse his opinions by force." In thirteen years, five editors of a Vicksburg paper met with violent deaths.

The history of Southern literary aspirations is a truly pathetic one. There were such aspirations. But the trouble was that the profession of literature was rather looked down upon by the influential, while many who essayed the task of writing anything at all were without proper training. The institutions of the people were against literature. In spite of these drawbacks, however, the South produced some work of decided merit. This is particularly true of political writing, wherein men like Marshall, Madison, and Jefferson are among the first. Among authors of a less serious kind were Tucker, Cooke, Wilde, Thompson, Simms, Kennedy, and others. Our author quotes Bishops Polk and Elliott, in their address upon the proposed University of the South, as using the following language: "Labor is performed among us by a caste; and there is, in consequence, a large body of men who can devote themselves to the elegancies of literature, and to such a culture as shall make their homes the envy of all lands."

In this connection Mr. Ingle refers to the belief current in the South that a combination of Northern writers determined to prevent the recognition of Southern authors in the field of literature, but he thinks the belief had little foundation to rest upon. For on the other side of the Potomac men were as ready to avail themselves of the advantages of coöperation in literature as in other things. The absence in the South of such coöperation, was a serious detriment to Southern literary aspirations. It is further added in this connection that "complaints of antagonism in the North to Southern authors, while possibly applicable to individuals, probably reflected the inexperience of the complainants, for they cannot stand firmly against the facts regarding the mass." The announcement of the publishers of the "New American Cyclopaedia," for example, declared the intention of the promoters to have all sections fairly represented in that work. In point of fact, Southern authors whose books were worth publishing usually found every encouragement at the North, as the list of books so published indicates.



Occasional efforts were made in different forms to arouse the people on the subject of literature, and historical societies, lyceums, and literary associations were organized in various portions of the South; but they were usually hampered by causes both moral and social. More or less successful magazines also emanated from the more cultivated centres of literary activity; but they were on the whole short-lived and went the way of many other noble but ill-advised efforts. The most successful of these ventures were the *Southern Literary Messenger* of Richmond, the *Southern Quarterly Review* of Charleston, and DeBow's *Commercial Review*, of New Orleans.

Mr. Ingle devotes considerable space, and justly so, to the various plans for progress in the South; but in writing of the many conventions called for that purpose he does not appear to note the fact that the politicians rather than the business men dominated the meetings. The convention idea found expression shortly after the Nullification movement in South Carolina. The main object was to impress upon the Southern people the necessity of commercial independence, and that "commercial credit and capital should be extended, that a portion of capital should be directed into commercial lines, that the banks should aid the merchants, that foreign capital and credit should be attracted, and that to make possible direct lines of packets from and to Southern ports a demand should be created at those ports by opening up the interior of the country." The representative meeting of this character seems to have been the Memphis Convention of 1845, which was attended by six hundred delegates representing sixteen Southern and Western States and Territories. Mr. Calhoun was chosen president and strongly urged national appropriations for the improvement of the Mississippi river, which he called "the great highway of western commerce, the inland sea of the country." Other conventions of similar character were held in St. Louis, Memphis, Bristol, New Orleans, and elsewhere. At a large meeting in the latter city a plan was

proposed for the construction of a railway from New Orleans to Washington.

It is time, however, to notice what Mr. Ingle has to say about slavery under its three phases,—social, economic, and political. “By 1835, it had wrought its work socially; it was still to continue to affect the South economically; and as a political factor it was to increase in power, dividing great ecclesiastical bodies, disrupting two parties just organized for their national contest, and finally embroiling the country in armed strife. It so permeated society that few questions could be considered without reference to it; it was the burden of observation by English travellers and visitors from the North, and was the text of thousands of pages of manuscript used in newspapers, magazines, or bulky volumes, and of thousands more in addresses from the pulpit, the legislative bodies, and on the stump, in which its evils were confessed by Southern men, and its advantages for both races were set forth.”

The average number of slaves held by each owner was less than ten. In 1850 it was estimated that 400,000 slaves were employed in the cities and 2,500,000 on the farms and plantations. Mr. Ingle seems to fail to notice that the laws prohibiting the education of slaves were directed against their learning to write rather than to read. Some have thought that this indicates a fear that the slaves would impose upon their patrol by supplying forged passes. Nor does our author pay any attention to the old controversy as to whether baptism emancipated the slave, which was finally decided in the negative. But the slaves took kindly to religion anyway, and the more humane owners finally saw to their spiritual instruction. In 1859, of 468,090 negro church members in the South, 215,000, according to Mr. Ingle, were classed as Methodists, and 175,000 as Baptists; and in 1853, 5,000 South Carolina slaves raised \$15,000 in collections. Among the brighter pictures of this institution our author notes “a nine-year-old boy reading the *Dispatch* in 1861 to his master, whose eye-sight was dim; a woman making a tempo-

rary loan to her owner ; a professional man borrowing a dollar from his servant to make a contribution to the New Orleans sufferers ; a South Carolina gentleman refusing, except at night, to leave his slaves during a cholera epidemic ; and the cheerfulness and light-heartedness generally observed among the negroes." But the evils of the system could not be enumerated. The caste spirit, not to speak of the natural injustice of the institution, and its widespread demoralizing effects were recognized even by many of the Southerners themselves ; but men could be found who undertook to argue, even from the Bible, that the system was not only right and proper, but also highly beneficial to the slave himself. As time rolled on, it may have become more and more difficult to emancipate slaves, while the lot of the freedmen did not, on the whole, improve ; but we think if Mr. Ingle had brought out more strongly the relative wealth of the free persons of color, he would have thrown additional light upon a very interesting point.

One great reason why emancipation was not general was the fact of the value of slaves in the production of cotton, tobacco, and rice ; but "the tightening of the restrictions upon them was an expression, not of harsh feeling against them, but of a determination to prevent any such act as that attempted in 1850 at Harper's Ferry, which illustrated the fanatic mind of the extreme abolitionist. The history of emancipation tendencies in the South was the result of an apprehension that they would endanger the domestic security of Southern homes, and of the natural attitude of resistance to extraneous purposes to free the blacks, whatever might be the fate of the whites." Mr. Ingle argues, moreover, that if slavery had not become the basis of sectional hatred, it would have eventually disappeared from at least five Southern States ; but events were rapidly assuming shape which were destined to cut out the social cancer forever.

The Southern people, in our author's opinion began more and more to conclude that it was possible to convert

the general government into an engine of attack upon the "peculiar institution;" and this belief grew into a firmer conviction when men realized that the pro-slavery sentiment in the North was mostly confined to Democratic office-seekers. At the same time there was great opposition to the secession movement, especially in the more westerly States of the South. Mr. Ingle draws attention to the fact, moreover, that the great difference between the contention of 1776 and the asserted right to secede in 1861 lay in the fact that the colonists revolted against a government in whose creation they had taken no part, while the Southern States revolted against a government in whose foundation they had taken a conspicuous part. It took only thirty years for South Carolina's nullification theories to ripen into true secession. Finally, however, when the conflict was over not only had the South and the nation been relieved of an incubus, but a vast section of country, with a magnificent territory, fertile lands, delightful climate, and the richest mineral deposits, was thrown open to the world and opportunity was given the South of assuming a rôle in the economic and industrial world, which could scarcely have been accorded her under former theories and conditions.

A CAROLINIAN.